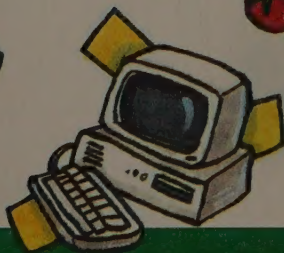
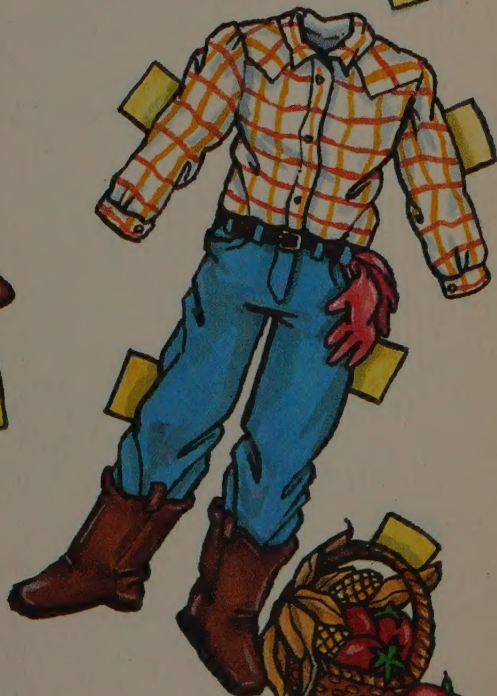


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ONE

# LUTHERAN WOMAN TODAY

JUNE  
1992



MAY 13 REC'D

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## DISCIPLESHIP

## Letters to the editor ♦♦

### Women-exalted bandwagon

If, indeed, we are "community," (March 1992 LWT), it seems to me it is time to talk of *men* and *women* as community. And get off the women-exalted bandwagon. Maybe there's a reason, besides some of the obvious ones, why men are not always respectful of the female sex. Could it be that we are often bossy, domineering, self-righteous just *because* we are women?

*Mrs. Milton Guenther  
Dunn Center, North Dakota*

### Speaks to a wider audience

It happened again. The mail arrived just as I was about to leave to teach my class, "Human Relations for Teachers"—and the March LWT was in the mailbox. I was delighted to see that the cover and cover meditation spoke beautifully to issues I explore with my students—community, relationships, interdependence, and I shared them with my class.

The June 1991 issue on men had also provided food for thought and discussion in class. Be assured that while LWT may target women, it also speaks to a wider audience—and in my thinking, it speaks very effectively. Thank you for enriching our understanding of what it means to be human.

*Donna Streufert  
Concordia University  
Milwaukee, Wisconsin*

### January a blessing

Your January LWT was such a delight. I am a long-time reader and missed *Scope* when it became LWT. It never came up to my enjoyment of *Scope* until this issue, which includ-

ed so many interesting articles. Keep up the good work.

*Margaret Somers  
Arlington, Virginia*

Thank you for the wonderful LWT January issue! The blessings have been wonderful to read during my long-term convalescence . . . my spirit has been uplifted and God is blessing me and my family in many ways.

*Lia Staaf  
Bay Village, Ohio*

### Writers without collars?

I am a careful reader of your publication and take note of the credentials of your authors, which leads me to ask why the overwhelming majority of writers for LWT are clergy. Especially after reviewing the February LWT I have to wonder if any people, any ordinary people without collars, write for your publication. Or, does concern for doctrinal correctness work against submission from the laity?

*Doreen H. Brennan  
Rocky Point, New York*

## ♦ HONOR ROLL ♦

Congratulations to:

- Fredericksburg; Minden, Nebraska
- Hope; Makoti, North Dakota
- Our Savior's; Oakes, North Dakota
- Rosebud; Lemmon, South Dakota
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- Salem; Brooklyn, New York.

Honor Roll congregations are those in which all women subscribe to LWT. For information, write LWT Promotion, Box 1209, Minneapolis, MN 55440; Attention: Anita Oach

What does the whimsical paper-doll art of Anastasia Mitchell on the cover of this issue have to do with "Discipleship"? One answer might be that the art of examples of what disciples *do*, our ministries in daily life. But disciples-as-papers is an incomplete picture of discipleship, just as showing paper-doll clothes without a paper doll is incomplete.

Article after article in this issue reminds us that God acts first for us—that we do absolutely nothing to bridge the gap between God and us that our sins have created. That discipleship is, first and foremost, a state of being. Helen Kier (p. 8) points out that God's self-introduction to Moses was not a litany of things done. God did not say, "I'm a creator by trade." Rather God said: "I am Who I Am" (Exodus 3:14). We are not what we are—disciples—because of what God-in-Christ does, not because of what we do.

Now that God-in-Christ has closed the gap, we become disciples "heavenly-minded" on living for others and for God's glory, and on sharing the good news of God's grace. And we do so with tremendous God-given energy and variety. There is no "one-look-fits-all" way to dress for discipleship. As the range of

clothes and accessories on the cover—and sprinkled throughout the issue—suggests, there are as many ways to be a disciple as there are disciples!

And there is no paper doll on the cover for a reason—so that we all might add ourselves to the picture. What does a disciple look like? You. Me. All children of God.

Just as we "put on the whole armor of God" (Ephesians 6:11), so we discover our gifts and assume a multitude of ministries in our daily lives. The paper-doll art signals the host of ways we claim our gifts and live out our discipleship. What clothing or accessories might symbolize your discipleship? Your ministries in daily life?

This issue has a freshness and joy about it. For nothing speaks more clearly of grasping the spirit of God's grace than "being and doing" our discipleship with joy—even when, as Ted Schroeder reminds us (p. 5), Jesus' call to "follow me," means denying ourselves or giving up our life.

As we focus on "being each day, a follower of Christ" (Eleanor Stonebraker, p. 18) we can be confident that we are properly dressed for discipleship.

*The Editors*

**ON THE COVER:** Ink and watercolor by Anastasia Mitchell, Lakeville, Minn.

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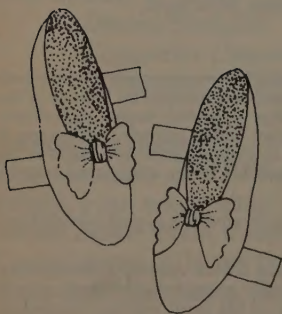
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the benefit of Women of the ELCA participants, articles relating to men of the ELCA mission areas are marked with these symbols: **▲** = on, **☉** = community and **☐** = growth.

<b>Editor</b> Cy J. Stelling	<b>Managing Editor</b> Sue Edison-Swift	<b>Production Editor</b> Ann Harrington
<b>Editorial Specialist</b> Thia J. Mickelson	<b>Editorial Secretary</b> Margarita Tolen	<b>Production Assistant</b> Gayle V. Aldrich
<b>Graphic Design</b> Baehr Design	<b>Guest Planners</b> Sally Simmel Bertha von Craigh Chicago, Illinois	

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# Discipleship

Ted Schroeder

**Disciple** (from the Greek word *Mathaetaes*): One who has been taught or instructed. One who follows the teacher.

Jesus' disciples were easily identified. They followed Jesus everywhere. Their faces were familiar. Even their accent betrayed them, as Peter found out (Matthew 26:73).

Not so today. It's hard sometimes to tell who is a disciple. We don't act or dress differently. Very likely, someone could watch us a long time and never know we are followers of Jesus.

**Fantasy exercise:** Imagine that we Christians did mark ourselves. Suppose we wore an "I am a follower of Jesus" uniform of some sort. Perhaps at Baptism we might all put on a

white outfit with a cross embroidered on the front.

The idea has possibilities. We could easily identify our disciples. We might even recognize more accomplished disciples by adorning their uniforms with bars for faithful service (remember the Sunday school attendance awards?)

Of course, uniforms have their drawbacks, too. How would we deal with the attention (hatred? scorn? something else?) we would get from "people of the world"? Perhaps it would be easier to put the uniform in the back of the closet and get it out only on Sundays.

Indeed we might be tempted to hide the uniform—until going got tough. In time

able, uniform firmly in  
e, we'd seek to savor again  
us' wonderful promises:  
*ne to me, all you that are  
ry and are carrying heavy  
dens, and I will give you  
Take my yoke upon you,  
learn from me; for I am  
le and humble in heart,  
you will find rest for your  
s. For my yoke is easy, and  
burden is light*" (Matthew  
8-30).\*

*came that they may have  
and have it abundantly"*  
n 10:10b).

*My sheep hear my voice. I  
v them, and they follow me.  
ve them eternal life, and  
will never perish. No one  
snatch them out of my  
d"* (John 10:27-28).

*peace I leave with you; my  
e I give to you. . . . Do not  
our hearts be troubled, and  
ot let them be afraid"* (John  
7).

**H**ow often we need to  
hear such words.  
Yes, Lord—in the  
dle of this muddled world  
of false promises and fad-  
hope; in this frightening, vi-  
t, threatened world—we  
following. What else can we  
Where can we go but to the  
who loves us with an eter-  
love?

o, in response, we put on  
uniform. At least to the best  
ur ability we seek to live as  
is' disciples. We go to  
ch more or less regularly  
ny people—even church

members—do not). We try to  
discipline our children, if not  
our tongues. We pray before  
meals—sometimes even in  
public places. We might even  
serve on a congregational  
board, teach a class, sing in the  
choir—things like that to mark  
our discipleship.

Perhaps if God gave awards  
for good discipleship, we might  
even have a cluster of modest  
ribbons on our uniform that  
would show our dedication and  
discipleship.

But before we take too many  
bows, let's look again at how  
Jesus describes the life and ac-  
tions of his disciples:

*"Everyone  
therefore who ac-  
knowledges me  
before others  
[like wearing a  
uniform, per-  
haps?], I also  
will acknowl-  
edge before my*

*Father in heaven; but whoever  
denies me before others, I also  
will deny before my Father in  
heaven.*

*"Do not think that I have  
come to bring peace to the earth;  
I have not come to bring peace,  
but a sword. . . . Whoever loves  
father or mother more than me  
is not worthy of me; and who-  
ever loves son or daughter more  
than me is not worthy of me;  
and whoever does not take up  
the cross and follow me is not  
worthy of me. Those who find  
their life will lose it, and those  
who lose their life for my sake*



will find it" (Matthew 10:32-39).

*"So therefore, none of you can become my disciple if you do not give up all your possessions" (Luke 14:33).*

*"Be perfect, therefore, as your heavenly Father is perfect" (Matthew 5:48).*

Hard words for "wannabe" disciples. Such outrageous expectations. Is Jesus serious? Sounds a bit like the "I say to you" in Matthew 5:39-42: Turn the other cheek . . . go the second mile . . . give to everyone who begs! Does Jesus really expect a disciple to be "perfect": one who lives outside of herself/himself; one who has forsaken everything—friends, family, possessions—and is willing to sacrifice even life itself for others?

Is that what it means to be

Does Jesus  
really expect a  
disciple to be  
"perfect," one  
who is willing  
to sacrifice even  
life itself for  
others?

a disciple?

Does Jesus want us to become wild, wandering fanatics with nothing but the clothes on our back? If that's what he means, how many disciples are there today?

None?

But Jesus always seems to be busy exploding human attempts to reach "godly" standards.

Remember the rich young

ruler (Luke 18:18)? He was a good person. By his own assessment he had kept the commandments since he was a child. Jesus loved him. And Jesus did not welcome him to take him at his word, ask him to come join the others, "do his best to follow." No, Jesus dropped a bomb right in the middle of the man's pride and possessions. *"Sell all that you own and distribute the money to the poor," Jesus said. ". . . then come, follow me" (18:22).*

All? Surely you must be kidding, Jesus. All of it? Everything I've accumulated over 30 years? All my stuff? All the things I own, my collections and possessions? Why, they're practically a part of me. They are absolutely necessary to life.

For a true disciple, nothing less will do.

But who, then, can be a disciple? *"Then who can be saved?"* the frustrated disciples asked.

*"What is impossible for mortals is possible for God,"* Jesus responds (Luke 18:26-27).

All our attempts to live up to our crafted standards of discipleship fail. Like the rich young man, we stand amid the rubble of our good intentions and say, "Impossible, Lord. Impossible. I cannot do it. I cannot give it all."

But our surprising God remakes our "impossibles" into new possibilities.

In the end, our disciples

not our self-made "disciple form" that we manufacture of our own goodness. **Discipleship is rather God at work in us.** As Jesus' disciples, the Spirit is making of us what God would have us be. God is creating, the light of the Spirit is in us, the hand of God touching others through us. *For we do not proclaim ourselves; we proclaim Jesus Christ as Lord. . . . For it is the Lord who said, 'Let light shine out of darkness,' who has shone in our hearts to give the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ. But we have this treasure in jars, so that it may be made known that this extraordinary power belongs to God and does not come from us"* (2 Corinthians 4:5-7).

For we "shine like stars in the world" (Philippians 2:15).

Who, us? Does the apostle mean us—with our broken-down excuses and faltering attempts at discipleship? Us? Most definitely.

**A**mid the darkness that threatens to engulf the world, among the lost that we encounter everyday, in the middle of the confusion of a million clamor-claims on the hearts of humankind, right there where people live grasping, grabbing, desperate lives—God has set perfect light; God's treasure in common clay pots; God's stars lighting the way.

That's us. Jesus' disciples. That—uniform or no—is who we are. In God's hands our discipleship is perfect (that is, being perfected). As the Spirit lives in us, we are effective, active, alive and worthy disciples.

Are we common? Yes. Unremark-

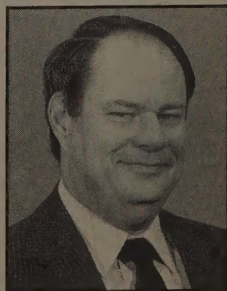
able? To be sure. Harried, hurried, doing what we can. Yet we are the disciples who shine in this dark world with God's brilliance, like stars lighting up the skies with eternal hope to make it clear that such an overwhelming power comes from God and not from us. ■

*The Rev. Ted Schroeder, Hoffman Estates, Illinois, has been a parish pastor, and is currently specialist for adult and leadership resource development for the Division for Congregational Ministries of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America.*

*\*All Scripture is quoted from the New Revised Standard Version.*



**Discipleship  
is God at work  
in us.**



# Discipleship— A Way of Being

Helen R. Harms

As I paged through a mail-order catalog, I came across a T-shirt with the following inscription:

*"To Do Is To Be"*—**Socrates**

*"To Be Is To Do"*—**Plato**

*"Do Be Do Be Do"*—**Sinatra**

That clever inscription seems to capture the struggle and stress we experience as we attempt to understand—for our own lives—the nature of discipleship.

We live in a culture that so often defines people by what they do, or have accomplished. Listening to introductions in a church group, we hear people say: I am a teacher, pastor, attorney, homemaker, nurse, secretary, doctor, scientist, salesperson. Similarly, when we think about discipleship, we are tempted to list "acts" of discipleship.

Often when I talk to older people I hear them lament that they are unable to "do" all the things they have done in the past as members of a congregation. In our goal-oriented,



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that as discip  
our actions f  
from "being  
disciples.

One pl  
where I ha

learned about discipleship as a way of being is through my ministry with Appalachian people. In many mountain communities, an individual is not measured by what he or she has achieved. The critical element shaping identity here is *kinship*. Who you are is defined by "whose" you are. Your membership in a family. How you live with others is often more important than how much money you make, your education, or your home.

Moreover, discipleship as a way of being is biblically based—and rooted in the gospel of Jesus. Look, for instance, at God's relationship to us in Exodus 3:6, God's identification through relationship. "I am the God of your father, the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob."

Moses, trembling in fear before the burning bush, asks God for a sign to give to the Egyptians. The sign God gives is "I Am Who I Am" (Exodus 3:14). God chooses not to give a list of accomplishments, beginning with the creation of the world! Instead, God expresses identity as "being."

Jesus came to be with us as an infant. Like the baby Jesus—like other babies—was not expected to *do* anything. Like other babies, his personhood came simply from being. Jesus' incarnation was God's way of being with us.

Christ's death and resurrection opened for us a new relationship with God. We are no longer separated from God. Through Christ, we are now defined as "sisters and brothers," adopted children of a loving and gracious God. Through the Holy Spirit, Christ comes to be with us every day of our lives as we walk through good times and bad. This means that our discipleship is rooted in our relationship with God.

Every year our family eagerly and anxiously watches for a Christmas letter from a dear, longtime friend, Carl Spangenberg. Eagerly, because it brings such hope and grace. Anxiously, because the effort to write the letter may some year prove too great. Sometime in early adulthood, Paul was diagnosed as having multiple sclerosis. For a while Paul could function well in his pastoral ministry, despite his illness. But as the years progressed, so did his illness.

At one point, Paul shared with us the frustration of having a mind and heart eager for pastoral ministry but a body that held him captive. For a time, he was able to serve as a chaplain in a nursing home. Today he no longer can.

Some would say that Paul's ministry is over because he is unable to "do" many things. But Paul continues to minister to many—and to me especially—by modeling discipleship as a way of being.

Paul continues to hope in the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ despite the difficulties

of his illness. His act of discipleship is to share that hope in Jesus Christ with people like me who sometimes forget, in the midst of all the doing, that discipleship is first of all being in relationship with God and resting in our hope in our Lord Jesus Christ. ■

*Helen R. Harms, Somerset, Kentucky, serves part-time as shared staff with the Evangelical Lutheran Coalition for Mission in Appalachia and as mission director for the Indiana-Kentucky Synod. She was on the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America church council, 1987–1991.*



# Ministry in Daily Life

Sally Simmel



**Ministry in daily life: what God's people do in the world because of God's grace.**

A friend in the corporate world was telling me recently that the big “buzzwords” in business these days are *empowerment*, *transformation* and *commitment*. Sound familiar?

That got me to thinking about some of the church buzzwords—we all use jargon from time to time about my own work. In the past we used to talk about “lay ministry,” to distinguish it from ordained ministry. For most people that meant lay people who served in traditional ministry settings of church and community: congregations, hospitals, nursing homes and the like. Then we moved in our terminology to the phrase “ministry of the laity,” underscoring the truth that people who are not ordained also have a ministry beyond the church. This ministry might include work in neighborhood and family. Good move!

“Ministry in daily life” is a phrase coined by a group of lay and clergy persons who sensed deeply that all God’s people have a ministry, and that it is lived out in God’s all-encompassing world. They believed that for some, God’s call sends them into “full-time” church work and that, for others, God’s call asks them to serve in a station or occupation in other places in the world—sustaining, improving, transforming God’s creation.

Is *ministry in daily life* a buzzword? Jargon? Does it go deeper—to explain what it is that God’s people do in the world because of the grace of God?

What do we mean when we say the phrase? What do we believe about the possibility that there is ministry happening in places other than those we

red." Five hundred years after Luther gave us "the sthood of all believers" we're still struggling to give temporary meaning to this biblical concept. Good ggle!

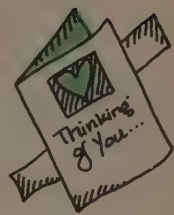
nd the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America ports that struggle and the activity of committed ons as they seek to "transform the world." In the rchwide office of the ELCA, for example, there is epartment for Ministry in Daily Life in the Divi- for Ministry. And the production of the resources inistry in daily life that you see on the parish l is coordinated by a resource specialist in the Di- on for Congregational Ministries. Part of what we s assist "ministers in daily life" in discerning their s and valuing the call that each of them has.

uther clearly stated that we all have work (paid and unpaid) given by God, and the tools (spiritual and physical) to be about that work faithful ways—sustaining, improving and trans- ing God's world. Yet it is often difficult for many s to comprehend fully our daily activities as *min-*.

or some, the understanding grows and evolves years. For others, it comes at the moment of re- ing that ministry is possible even in places that n *unsacred*, in work that seems meaningless.

wo examples help illustrate this point. Recently a ng woman was unable to attend the full session of ngregational council retreat. She had agreed to do resentation and was forced by circumstances (in- ing a sick child, a job change, and a real estate otiation) to come late and leave early. No one con- red her dilemma. No one affirmed her faithfulness oing the presentation in spite of the other pres- es. She came away from the day with a bad taste, ng criticized for not staying the whole time. The up didn't get it. Do we?

nother story: A man who works in marketing for mall business was involved in preparing billboards dvertise a product. The design group presented a oosal for a billboard that was clearly racist in na- e. Everyone liked it, except him. He struggled: My What does my faith say? How do I influence the ole who will make that decision? He didn't have power to overrule. He decided to speak and made point clear, in hopes of changing some hearts and ds. They wrestled with his point and got it. He n't have to go and picket against racism in another



**We all have  
work (paid and  
unpaid) given  
by God, and  
the spiritual  
and physical  
tools to go  
about that  
work in  
faithful ways.**

place. The opportunity was right there for him he took it!

My morning meditations include readings from *Meditations for Women Who Do Too Much* (HarperCollins, 1990) by Anne Wilson Schaef. The reading for February 1 contains these words: "I know, somewhere deep inside us, that even if what we are doing doesn't exactly have a great cosmic meaning, the way we go about it and the interactions we have with others around our work can give meaning beyond itself. Regardless of what we do, we do have an opportunity to make it sacred work."

God loves the world (John 3:16). That includes the church, of course, but that love is not limited to the church. As Christians we see and "use" the world differently. It is important to *do* the gospel as we *spread* the gospel. As an ELCA laywoman, Gayle Bintliff, said, "The gospel is turned loose in the world every morning, and the congregation needs to be about the business of empowering all those who bear the gospel into the world day after day" (From *On Assignment from God: The Ministry of the Baptized*, Division of Ministry, ELCA, 1991).

May you see the profound meaning of your work, paid or unpaid, mundane or miraculous—and God's activity in it. ■

*Sally Simmel's ministries include that of mother-in-law, daughter, friend, sister, neighbor, and her work as director for Ministry in Daily Life in the ELCA Division for Ministry.*



## To learn more about ministry in daily life:

**The Whole Ministry Catalog** features a collection of ELCA materials, programs and resources examining ministry in daily life.

**On Assignment from God: The Ministry of the Baptized** is a resource drawn from papers presented to the ELCA Task Force on the Study of Ministry in October 1990. It combines faith-in-life experiences with theological reflections on those experiences.

Single copies of these resources are available free through the ELCA Resource Information Service 1-800-638-3522.

# “You Are on the Committee”

Marj Leegard

“This is the church,  
This is the steeple;  
Open the doors, and  
See all the people!”

**T**hough it has been many years since I learned this finger play, I still remember how bewildering it was for me, as a child, to try to move my finger—only to find the opposite finger wiggling! I have been reminded of this old game as the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America does when looking at itself as a church—it often finds some “wiggles” of itself—as it seeks to understand how to give order and form to its ministries.

The Commission for a New Lutheran Church, the transitional body that helped shape the ELCA, wisely decided to provide for time, thought and churchwide involvement before decisions about forms of ministry were made. Each of the three existing church bodies brought different understandings, practices and denominical ties into the new church, and into discussions about ministry. About the same time, renewed interest in the ministry of the laity was

also emerging in the church. Therefore, it was—and is—important to get the collective thoughts of God’s people about ministry.

When our daughter, Laurie, was small she traveled with me to meetings of the Bible Retreat Board, coloring signs for prayer group at her grandmother’s while I attended the retreat. When I’d return home in the evening to tuck her in bed, she asked if other mothers had brought little girls. I explained that the only other mother and daughter there were Olga and her grown daughter, Mercedes. “Let’s pray,” I said, “that when you are grown we will go to the retreat together.”

With eyes tightly closed and little hands folded in mine, we prayed—but Laurie added, “And I want to be on the committee.”

With childlike simplicity, she caught a wonderful vision, and her words of long ago capture exactly what is happening now as the ELCA studies ministry in the church: “You

are on the committee.” The study of ministry is important to all members of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America.

For the God who “sent his Son . . . in order to redeem” and who “has sent the Spirit of his Son into our hearts” (Galatians 4:4-6) also sends each of us forth—in *ministry*.

Because you are a vital part of ministry, the task force charged with doing this study of ministry is using many avenues to invite you into the study. These avenues include forums, hearings, study guides, interest groups, speakers and a study edition of the report made to the 1991 churchwide assembly. No doubt many of you in your congregations have already been involved in a study of ministry discussion. If not, there is still opportunity to be “on the

committee.” (See page 16 for more information.)

Among God’s people there has never been a time when leaders and followers, pastors and people did not walk together in ministry. However, the time has not been, nor yet will be, when we all understand just how closely related all of our ministries are. But we are moving in that direction.

Think of it: A sermon becomes a sermon when listeners in the pews take it to heart. Baptism becomes

The study of ministry is important to all members of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America.





We are—  
ordained  
and laity  
together—  
in an  
inseparable  
communion  
of saints.

As the unbaptized are brought to the font and the church community commits itself to nurture the new believers. The Eucharist takes effect as open hands receive the body of Christ and the blood.

And so all of us come together, drawn by faith to the word and the sacraments. We are—ordained and gathered together—in an inseparable communion of saints. We build together. And we treasure what has been built. It has been that way since Pentecost. And it will continue that way until Jesus comes again.

God's presence is made known in the world. You hear or speak the blessing, "Go in peace. Serve the Lord." You answer, "Thanks be to God," in effect, thanking God for the gracious invitation to be a disciple! What the church decides about how to order its ministries is impor-

tant to all of us. As the church decides, it will ask, which forms will best serve God's mission? Which best support the ministry of both ordained and lay? Which forms will call all of us most clearly to the service God asks of us? Which forms will help us in our relationships with other church bodies?

But central to all forms of ministry is our reason for existence as the ELCA, captured so well in the words of 1 Peter 2:9b: "That you may declare the wonderful deeds of him who called you out of darkness into his marvelous light."

The doors are opened. See all the people! People in ministry! ■

*Marj Leegard, a farmer from Detroit Lakes, Minnesota, is a member of the task force for the Study of Ministry, where she serves as secretary and member of the executive committee.*

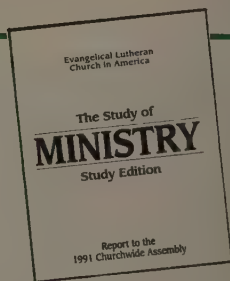
The ELCA Study of Ministry has been charged by the church with studying and making recommendations to the 1993 churchwide assembly on "appropriate forms of ministry that will enable this church [the ELCA] to fulfill its mission." It has been directed to give special attention to: the tradition of the Lutheran church; the possibility of articulating a Lutheran understanding and adaptation of the threefold ministerial office of bishop, pastor, and deacon and its ecumenical implications; the appropriate forms of lay ministries to be officially recognized and certified by this church, including criteria for certification, relationship to synods, and discipline; and the ministry of all the baptized people of God.

To carry out this work, in 1988 the church appointed a task force of 17 people from across the ELCA. These people meet together three times a year (January, June, and October) for three days at a time to study and discuss issues together. They have made several reports (to the churchwide assemblies in 1989 and 1991; to synod assemblies in 1989 and again this year; three reports each year in the Action Packet mailed to congregations). The task force has also encouraged churchwide participation through hearings in 26 locations in 1989 and forums for discussion in 38 locations in 1991 and 1992, in which nearly 1000 people took part. It will be

formulating recommendations at its meetings in June and October 1992 and in January 1993, so that its work can be reviewed by the Board of the Division for Ministry and the ELCA Church Council, and then acted on at the churchwide assembly in August 1993 in Kansas City.

An excellent way to study ministry in groups is to use the six-session adult forum booklet *The Shape of Ministry: A Study of Ministry in the ELCA*, available from Augsburg Fortress (study book: code 15-9296, \$2.50; leader guide: code 15-9297, \$1.95).

Paul R. Nelson  
Director,  
*Study of Ministry*



The task force's fullest report so far, *The Study of Ministry Report to the 1991 Churchwide Assembly: Study Edition* is available from the ELCA Distribution Center for the cost of postage and handling (code 68-0063).

Your comments and concerns about the Study of Ministry can be addressed to the task force by writing to Paul Nelson, Director for Study of Ministry, 8765 West Higgins Road, Chicago, Illinois 60631.

# The D's of Discipleship

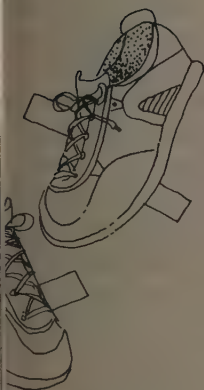
Eleanor Stonebraker

The steep hill down Domer Avenue from Good Acre Apartments ended abruptly in the Longbranch tributary of the Anacostia River. On the other side was Rolling Terrace Elementary School, which I as a youngster reached safely each day by crossing a wooden footbridge.

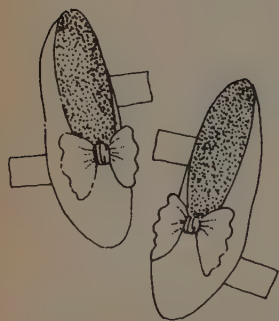
Each of our lives has its own steep hills and abrupt turns; each has its rivers to cross. As we deal with the responsibilities, challenges and heartaches of each day, we put one foot in front of the other in the hope that the One who has brought us to this morning will bring us to this evening safe—that Christ, who lays himself down before us, will be our footbridge to the future.

If Christ is the *way* into the future, then a disciple is *a follower of the way*. Following begins with taking a step, making a **decision**. Our stepping onto the way is a response to God's invitation, for surely our decision neither creates the way nor makes it safe. Yet if we would walk it, we must put our feet down and go where they take us. Without the stepping out, we know neither the way nor its safety.

For years Hazel belonged to Jerusalem Lutheran Church and worshiped there. When she brought her child to Sunday school, Hazel would sit in the coatroom where it was quiet and she could be alone and safe. One day she was invited to come out and teach Sunday school. Outside the coatroom there would surely be unruly students, staff conflicts, disappointments, she thought. But there might be, even with all that, a way to stand and walk safely. She wouldn't know if she didn't step out. She decided to see, and



Christ is the  
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found that the farther she went from the coat, the farther Christ stretched himself out for her!

Laurel decided that ending her marriage was the only safe way for her future. It was terrifying and suddenly without a home or an income—cut loose and free. Laurel desperately needed training in this life of freedom. She had marketable skills and career experiences; but now she needed skills for, and success at, living singly and supporting a child. It was a hard road, but after a moment of decision and years of **discipline**, she rejoiced in newfound security and the sure and certain knowledge that trainees in such freedom are upheld by grace.

Rose decided to go to seminary and undertake the discipline of study. It was exhausting as well as being to be working at school, working a job, working at home, working as a volunteer and working through family crises. It was a time of testing and turning. Had she decided on seminary rashly, accepted the discipline foolishly? Ordination was out ahead of her. Could she keep walking in this **direction**? Yes, she kept focused not on one day being a pastor but on being, each day, a follower of Christ.

Barb had decided that a discipline in the arts was calling her. She trained passionately and continually, accepted challenges as they arose, and found herself walking a well-defined way. Still, after a solid decision, decades of discipline, and an established reputation, there remained the need for **discernment**. Each new opportunity was an invitation for “testing the spirits”: What is really inspiring my walk? Christ I am following? Should I change direction? she decided. It was within her chosen discipline that her discipleship lay.

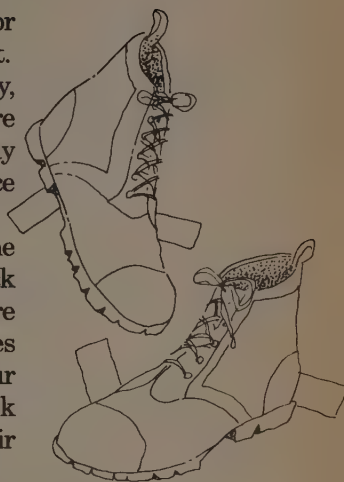
The process of discernment never ends for the faithful. In conversations with other disciples, in prayer and meditation on Scripture, in availing ourselves of the means of grace, we examine our decisions, disciplines and directions. Are we walking the way we are building a bridge? Can any bridge of our own building take us safely into the future?

On those days when I walked to Rolling Terrace school and there were no student patrols on duty, I sometimes took **delight** in walking the railing rather than the bed of the bridge. Discipleship takes a certain

ng. The schoolgirl on the railing, the mother  
 erging from the coatroom, the woman without an  
 ne, the student with too many commitments, the  
 essional reexamining choices: all are a bit like Pe-  
 stepping into the sea when Jesus says, "Come."  
 a stays safe, not by looking down at her feet or  
 nd at the **dangers**, but looking ahead to Christ.  
 the end, however, it is not by stepping bravely,  
 ticing daily, and watching carefully that we are  
 d. It is not by the steps we take, but by the way  
 walk. And the way has been under our feet since  
 Baptism.

Baptism puts the uncertainty of our future into the  
 ainty of God's future. Whether this day will knock  
 own or buoy us up, we do not know. But we are  
 to set our feet down in it, to train for what comes  
 s, to focus on Christ ahead of us, to assess our  
 d movements in light of his bold ones, and to risk  
 elves on the road. Followers of Jesus risk their  
 because they cannot lose them.

is not our decisions, disciplines, directions, dis-  
 sments that save our lives, but these make evident  
 ridge under our feet. Without the **D's** of disciple-  
 , there is no witness; we witness to the way by  
 ing it. Hazel, Laurel, Rose and Barb are evan-  
 ts. They bear the gospel to me, to each other, and  
 anyone wondering how to walk safely into the fu-  
 . Because of their daring, I can dare. Because they  
 w Christ, I can follow, crossing from Good Acre to  
 ng Terrace and risking even the railing. Followers  
 Christ will lead others to follow until stepping out  
 Longbranch holds no threats . . . until everyone  
 ws the way. ■



**We are saved  
 not by the  
 steps we take,  
 but by the way  
 we walk.**

*nor Stonebraker of Indiana,  
 ssylvania, holds a master of  
 ological studies degree from  
 ity Lutheran Seminary in  
 mbus, Ohio. She is adjunct  
 f at Shalem Institute for  
 itual Formation.*



# Session 6

## Mission and Vocation

Judith A. VanOsdol-Hansen  
Robert J. LaRiviere

**Bible Basis: Matthew 10:1-42**

**Study Text: Matthew 10:1-33**

The sending out, or first mission of the disciples, is told in chapter 10 of Matthew's gospel. The study text points to an understanding of vocation that is helpful for today's disciples.

The text leads us to contemplate the mission and vocation to which we are all called in Christ Jesus. It also helps us address both that which gets in the way of vocation and that which empowers it.

### Opening Prayer

*Gracious God of love, Creator of all, open our hearts and minds to receive your word. Take away all that would keep us from loving you and serving our neighbors. We lay our burdens at the foot of your cross, knowing that you have the power to make all things new. We ask this in Jesus' name. Amen.*



### Understanding the Word

# 1

**Read 10:1-15.** Then reread verses 5-15, underlining in that section all the verbs, or words that show action. Make a list of these words, or "mission orders," for use later on in the study.

The first mission sending out in Matthew's gospel calls us to reflect on our vocation. Though there are obvious differences between the twelve mentioned in the text and today's disciples, we may find similarities between the mission of the twelve and our own.

Matthew's account of the first mission tells an "exclusive" story; the disciples are told explicitly to go to the Jews only—"the lost sheep of the house of Israel" (see verse 6).

Here we see that the covenant God made with the people of Israel long ago is still very much on the mind and heart of the Lord, for the chosen people are to be sought first, before any other mission is undertaken.

## 2

*Do you refer to your list of "mission orders." Think of missionaries today. How might the mission you made differ from modern mission commissions? How is mission today the same as in Jesus' time? How is it different?*

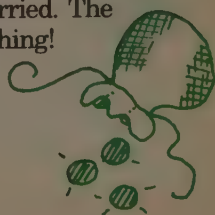
Reflect on Jesus' own ministry, which of course included teaching. The disciples are told to preach, heal, raise the dead, cleanse the lepers, and cast out demons. But, notice, they are not instructed to teach yet, for Jesus, the true teacher, is still among them.

Until after the resurrection, teaching is reserved for Jesus alone, Matthew 23:8 clearly states: "But you are not to be called rabbi [teacher], for you have one teacher, and you are all students."

## 3

**Read 10:9-11 again.** *Why do you think the disciples are given such specific instructions about what not to take along on the journey? What items the disciples are told to leave at home. What is left for the disciples to pack on their trip?*

The gold, silver, and copper (verse 9) refer to coins that were kept inside the belt; the bag (verse 10) may refer to either a money bag or a knapsack in which food and provisions could be carried. The disciples are to go barefoot, without even a change of clothing!



## 4

*The disciples are instructed to leave for their journey without money, food, extra clothing, footwear, or even a walking stick to help them along. What reason, or reasons, can you find in the text for the disciples to travel so lightly? What are your own thoughts on the matter?*

## 5

*Compare Jesus' two statements: "You received without payment; give without payment" (verse 8) and "laborers deserve their food" (verse 10). Are they contradictory, or can they work together? How? What limits does Jesus place upon what the disciples can accept from the people? Are there limits to what we should accept for the work we do?*

*What kinds of church work should be done on a purely volunteer basis? Too often ministry of the laity is confined to our volunteer work in service to the church, rather than including the living of our vocation in all corners of our lives.*

*How wise Jesus is in knowing that "extra baggage" will hinder the disciples along the road! For rather than depending on God, they will be tempted to trust only in themselves. Leaving home empty-handed, the disciples have to believe that God will provide. Herein lies the miracle of this journey of faith.*

## 6

*What kind of "extra baggage" are you carrying on your journey of faith? For instance, do anger, fear, anxiety, worry, envy, jealousy, stress, or consumer goods ever keep you from receiving hospitality, or hearing God's loving word from others?*

*Try now to make a list of the extra baggage you carry, things that make it harder for you to seek and do God's will. How can God work in your life to lighten your load?*



## Interpreting the Word

**Read verses 11-15.** This passage shows the power of the word of God at work. "As you enter the house. . ." (verse 12). The custom is to give a greeting of shalom—peace, health, and wholeness. This greeting is much more than a simple "How do you do?" It is the peace of God coming to that house through the very presence of the visitor. The disciples bring the word of peace in a very real way—they embody the "kingdom of heaven" (verse 7) that is at hand, as Jesus and John before him have proclaimed.

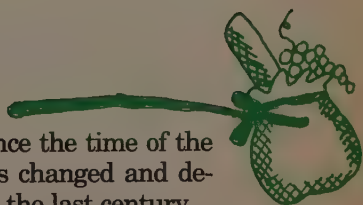
### 7

**Read verses 13-15.** *How should the disciples respond to people who do not receive their message? How would you describe in your own words the meaning of Jesus' words in verse 12? What do these verses suggest to you about the proper conditions for true hospitality? What about the integrity of Christian witness? [The teacher guide has some helpful thoughts here to use in the discussion.]*

### 8

*Take a moment about global mission. Do you, as a member of your congregation, directly or indirectly, support any missionaries? Imagine being sent to a place in which you are a stranger, learning a new language and culture. Is mission still important for the church today? For your congregation? Explain your answer.*

The church has carried out missionary work since the time of the apostle Paul. The understanding of mission has changed and developed a great deal over the years, especially in the last century. For instance, we no longer speak of "bringing the gospel to the heathen" as we did at one time, for several reasons. First, the word *heathen* carries two meanings: "unconverted" and "uncivilized." The "uncivilized" part of its definition can be harmful and misleading. Second, God's spirit is alive and active in many parts of the world, and the gospel doesn't exist only in the West as a commodity to be "bought" to everyone else. Third, indeed, we now speak of Christians and congregations around the world as "partners in ministry," or "companions." Think of the



sharing of global mission taking place through the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America's Companion Synod Program and Mission90. What can we learn from Christians in other parts of the world? What is our responsibility toward those who don't believe, whether they live next door or on the next continent?

### *Living the Word*

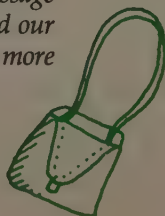
Mission work throughout the world is filled with challenges to God's people both at home and abroad. Our church, as well as other "main-line" denominations, is seeking to have evangelism play a much larger role in our lives. *Evangelical* is now part of our name—the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America.

## 9

*Do you think Christians consider evangelism to be more someone else's task, or their own? Explain your answer. We are called to go out to find the lost sheep and bring them in. Shouldn't it be the most natural thing in the world to tell people about what is closest and most important to us? Is it? Being an effective witness for Christ is not an easy task in our Western culture today—a culture that so highly values privacy and individual rights. If we do not discuss religion or politics in public, then what is left to discuss in public? Sports, cars, and the weather do not make for very satisfying public discourse for many of us. Christians could become a body of people with no voice. Have we surrendered our "right" to communicate that which we hold most dear?*

## 10

*What sort of "message" do we carry to the world around us? Are we bearers of God's greeting of shalom and messengers of God's kingdom? Take time to consider what message we convey by our words, our actions, and our use of money. How can we learn to be more effective gospel messengers?*



ad verses 16-42. This powerful instruction to the disciples deals with fear and anxiety, terms that appear often in Matthew's gospel. Jesus knows that the world to which we are sent is filled with danger—"See, I am sending you out like sheep into the midst of wolves" (verse 16). Therefore, Jesus admonishes us to "be wise as serpents and innocent as doves" (verse 16).

Fear and anxiety may affect our witness to Christ. But God promises that we are not sent out unprepared. Jesus gives us authority (verse 1) and a task to do; he promises that the Spirit will speak through us (see verse 20).

In the text Jesus warns of persecution—being hunted and hated for the sake of the gospel message. But God's promise of strength, endurance, and even the right words to speak when witnessing for the sake of Jesus, will carry us through times of fear. When God led Moses, that great leader objected, "I have never been eloquent but I am slow of speech and slow of tongue." God replied: "I will be with your mouth and teach you what you are to speak" (Exodus 4,12).

Witnessing to our faith in the world in which we live is the commission given to every disciple since God's promise was first promised. It is not only the job of pastors or other church workers. Witnessing is our common vocation through our Baptism into Christ. We are all called by our Baptism to proclaim Christ's kingdom and to tell the good news of righteousness and reconciliation. Chapter 10 of Matthew's gospel offers wisdom and hope for all of us who think we would never be smart enough, or strong enough in our faith, to share God's redeeming word with the world.

## Looking Ahead

In Session 7 we will explore the topic of healing and wholeness in Matthew 9:1-13, 18-26. Do miracle healings still occur today? What do we pray and God does not heal? Is wholeness possible in today's complex and broken world?

*The Rev. Judith VanOsdol-Hansen is pastor of Zion Evangelical Lutheran Church, Chicago, Illinois. The Rev. Robert LaRiviere is pastor of Christ Lutheran Church, Schoenersville, Pennsylvania.*

*God's Promise of Blessing: A Study of the Gospel of Matthew* was prepared by members of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America under the direction of The Rev. Ivis LaRiviere-Mestre, Editor. Contributing Editor: The Rev. Nancy Oster. Copyright © 1992 Augsburg Fortress. May not be reproduced without permission.

Comments and questions relating to the Bible study should be sent to the Rev. Karen Battle, Director for Educational Resources, Women of the ELCA, 35 W. Higgins Rd., Chicago, IL 60631-4189.

# Many Types

# One Spirit

Jack Finney

Ruth usually lay awake for an hour or two after she came home from chairing her congregational Women of the ELCA board meetings. She reflected on the tone of the meeting, who said what, the decisions made, and the flow of the meeting.

Tonight Ruth was getting some new insights into what made the board tick. Seventy-five members of Resurrection Lutheran Church, including all the Women of the ELCA board members, gathered for the annual parish leadership conference. This year's focus was on team-building, using the Myers-Briggs Type Indicator (MBTI).

The leader, Tom, opened by telling the group the MBTI was developed over a 20-year period by a mother-daughter team, Katherine Briggs and Isabel Briggs Myers. Today the tool has become one of the most widely used psychological instruments in industry, churches, schools, and military service.

Tom said the indicator shows what personality traits people prefer on four counts, or "continuums": *Extraversion—Introversion*; *Sensing—Intuition*; *Thinking—Feeling*, and *Judging—Perceiving*.

Tom made it clear that the MBTI is not meant to pigeonhole people. Rather, using the indicators is a way to help people become more aware of their God-given strengths and gifts, and to understand and appreciate those whose gifts and strengths are different from their own.

Each person attending the conference took the MBTI prior to the event, so Tom would have time to score them. As he passed out the results, he noted that each person will score somewhere on each of the four lines, or continuums, to varying degrees: slight, moderate, or extreme. No scores are right or wrong. Just different. He repeated those words.

Extraversion | | | | | | | | | | Introversion

Ruth discovered she is an *Extraverted Intuitive Feeling Perceiver*, or “ENFP” for short. The four letters when combined are called a **personality type**; and there are 16 distinct types, according to the Myers-Briggs tool.

Tom then began exploring what it looks like when the various types work together. He began with the *Extraversion—Introversion* continuum. These words are often misunderstood. Introversion does not mean a person isn’t social or doesn’t like people. For the purposes of the MBTI, the terms *Introversion* and *Extraversion* describe where people get their energy. An *extravert* is energized by being with people, while an *introvert* recharges her batteries in times of solitude.

**T**his continuum also gives clues about how people process information. *Extraverts* come to decisions by talking out loud, while *Introverts* ponder the issues inside themselves before sharing their decision.

Tom gave some suggestions for running a meeting. Since *Introverts* process their thoughts internally before they speak, the *Extraverts* often share their thoughts out loud before the *Introverts* have a chance. When eliciting opinions, he suggested going around the room so everyone has an opportunity to say what’s on his or her mind. *Introverts* appreciate receiving information and agendas in advance. *Extraverts* appreciate opportunities for group discussions. Ruth thought she would try these ideas at the next meeting.

Tom explained that the *Sensing—Intuition* continuum indicates how people prefer to take in information. *Sensing* types are good with details and live more in the present moment. *Intuitives* see the big picture and live more in the future.

This clicked for Ruth as she reflected on a recent Women of the ELCA planning meeting. As the board planned the activities for the year, a couple of the women, who she now realizes are *Sensing* types, began to discuss the details for the annual banquet. They were planning the menu, the entertainment, even the theme and centerpieces. Ruth, being an *Intuitive* type, became impatient and said, “We need to move along if we’re going to map out the whole year.” Every organization benefits from having both types: *Intuitives* to bring new ideas and *Sensing* types to carry out the details of those ideas.

Next Tom talked about *Thinking* and *Feeling* types. Tom noted that this does not mean that if you are a *Thinker* you don’t know how to feel, or if you are a *Feeler* you don’t know how to think.

These differences have to do with how we reach decisions—by way of logic or values. You get a clue that you're talking to a *Thinker* when you hear statements like "It's a matter of principle," or "This is fair." A *Feeler* might say "We have to consider how Joan will feel about this." or "In my heart I know this is the best decision."

This discussion helped Ruth (a *Feeling*-type) understand Michelle—the vice-president and a *Thinker*—a little better. "Maybe I shouldn't have taken Michelle's critique of the program so personally," Ruth realized. On the other side of the room, Michelle was wondering if her comments about the program had hurt Ruth's feelings. Michelle decided to ask Ruth to review her board report to see if it "stepped on anyone's toes."

**T**he last continuum looks at *Judging*—*Perceiving* types. Tom said *Judging* may not be the best choice of words, because people may get *Judging* mixed up with *judgmental*. But *Judging* types aren't judgmental, they simply like to bring closure. They appreciate planning, order and punctuality. *Perceivers* prefer to be flexible, spontaneous, and open-ended. They can better tolerate messiness and may be oblivious to the clock. It's helpful to have a balance in any organization. If everyone were a *Judging* type, the decisions might be made too quickly—just to get things "wrapped up." On the other hand, if everyone were a *Perceiver*, decisions might never be made because there would always be more information and other options to consider.

Ruth made a note to thank Helen, a *Judging* type, for help in moving the board along to decisions.

Tom then reminded the group that a little bit of knowledge can be dangerous. He's been studying personality types for several years and is still learning. He said that knowing our personality type is not meant to be used as an excuse not to use "the opposite traits." It is just easier—taking less time and energy—to use our preferred types, much like writing with our preferred hand. Tom especially suggested that folks not go home and tell people who have not taken the indicator what their types are. But he did say you'll find yourself noticing these preferences in people, and that should help you better appreciate and understand yourself and others.

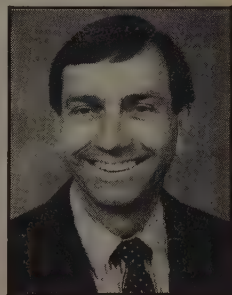
Tom closed the session with some thoughts based on 1 Corinthians 12:4: "Now there are varieties of gifts, but the same Spirit; and there are varieties of services, but the same Lord; and there

are varieties of activities, but it is the same God who activates all of them in everyone.”

- If you are an *Extravert*, gather the folks together for fellowship and sharing.
- If you are an *Introvert*, show others the beauty of solitude.
- If you are a *Sensing* type, help others appreciate the here-and-now.
- If you're an *Intuitive* type, open others to new possibilities and vision.
- If you are a *Thinker*, share your ideas with others.
- If you are a *Feeler*, be compassionate and empathetic.
- If you are a *Judger*, help organize and set goals.
- If you are a *Perceiver*, invite others to enjoy the here and now.

There are varieties of gifts, but one Spirit. ■

*The Rev. Jack Finney, an INFP, is pastor at Good Shepherd Lutheran Church, Oak Park, Illinois. He was trained to use the MBTI by the Alban Institute in Washington, D.C., and uses the indicator in teaching, counseling and preaching.*



## To learn more about the Myers-Briggs Type Indicator:

■ **God's Gifted People: Discovering Your Personality as a Gift** by Gary Harbaugh (Augsburg Fortress, expanded edition, 1990; \$4.95).

■ **Please Understand Me: Character and Temperament Types** by David Keirsey and Marilyn Bates (Prometheus Nemesis Books, 1978; \$11.95). To order, write the publisher at P.O. Box 2748, Del Mar, CA 92014 or phone 619/632-1575.

■ **Personality Type and Religious Leadership** by Roy M. Oswald and Otto Kroeger

(The Alban Institute, 1988; \$17.95. To order, call 1-800-457-2674).

■ **It Takes All Types!** by Alan W. Brownsword (Baytree Publication Co., 1987; \$13.00 plus shipping. To order, write or call HRM Press, P.O. Box 454, San Anselmo, CA, 415/453-4971).

■ **Type Talk: The Sixteen Personality Types That Determine How We Live, Love and Work** by Otto Kroeger and Janet M. Thuesen (Dell, 1989; \$9.95).

Occasionally people are called to extraordinary discipleship. Abraham and Sarah are asked to leave a comfortable life for some backwater country that God will show them. The voice in the burning bush calls Moses to tell powerful Pharaoh that he will have to go without his Hebrew slaves. Mordecai tells Esther that she may have been made queen to save her people.

# Just a Little Light

Karen Melang

Almost everyone is called to uncommon faith and obedience sometime in life. A child dies, a spouse leaves, a job is lost, or a diagnosis is bleak.

But the truth is that most discipleship is ordinary and mundane. We see no burning bushes, face no gladiators, hear no voices. Most of the time, disci-

plineship is getting up each day and trying to make the best of it. We ordinary disciples may feel that our spiritual lives are boring or trivial, quite unlike those with “real callings.”

The words *disciple* and *discipleship* are first cousins to *discipline*, a word that sounds vaguely distasteful to contemporary Christians, as we scurry after self-fulfillment, anxious to meet personal goals.

Webster’s says that to *discipline* means to “correct, mold, or perfect.” This description reminds me of having braces on my teeth—a long, slow correction, sure to be a nuisance and probably painful. This is not what we had in mind for our spiritual lives. We’re used to nanoseconds, instant cash, and push-button convenience. Anything painful is out of the question. We want to be the kind of people God wants us to be—quickly and effortlessly.

But it just doesn’t work that way. For every time we are summoned to phenomenal feats of faith, there are thousands of times when we are called to the homely disciplines of guarding our tongues, practicing kindness, giving generously, doing justice. Usually we are called to a discipleship that is altogether unremarkable. Our following Jesus is seldom flashy.



But it was not fireworks or even sparklers that Jesus meant when he said, "You are the light of the world" (Matthew 5:14), but a little cradle-lit lamp set on a lampstand. Not much light, really, but enough to brighten the faces around it.

I know (and so do you) those whose lives have been shaped by the discipline of following Jesus. Because they practice, these disciples make it look easy, even though it isn't. Their lives, molded by Christ's own, have warmed and brightened mine. Disciples such as:

Elaine, who told me after my miscarriage, "I've had free. If you need to talk, call me day or night."

Esther, whom I have never heard say a single unkind word about anyone.

Sylvia, who once told a reluctant congregational unit with a big bank account, "Ladies, once the money is in the women of the ELCA account, it's God's. Now what do you think God wants us to do with it?"

The people of Bethlehem Church who gave Ruby months of round-the-clock care so she could die at home.

Jan, whose hospitality makes each and every guest feel like royalty.

Patti, who visited Milt regularly while he was sick (she sits all the sick in the congregation), though she didn't know that he was influential in the university community and beyond, and who said, "I was really surprised at the hundreds of people at Milt's funeral. I didn't know he was such an important guy. He was just Milt to me."

Betty, who used to care for my kids when I needed a break and who wouldn't let me pay her. "Enjoying them pay enough," she'd say. "Someday you'll enjoy somebody else's."

Aggie, who gave me her rice pudding recipe and dying lessons. I hope I will be as brave and faithful as she.

I think none of these followers of Jesus would claim that their faith and lives are anything but ordinary. But to me, they, along with hundreds of others, are lamps set on lampstands giving light to the world. Not much light, really, just enough to get a glimmer of the face of God. ■

*Maren Melang, a trained deaconess, is a communicator at the University of Nebraska Cooperative Extension and a regular "Give Us This Day" columnist. She is married and has two children, ages 14 and 17.*



*It was not fireworks that Jesus meant when he said, "You are the light of the world."*

Matthew 5:14

# Marianne Johnson

Rosemary Dyson



**M**arianne Johnson's ministry is not of earthshaking proportions, but of small things. She will give somebody a hug if they're having a bad day. She may give words of comfort, or just let them talk about whatever is troubling them. She will pray for someone who needs solace.

Her work as a receptionist for *The Lutheran* magazine brings her into contact with all kinds of people. Making visitors feel welcome, and offering a sympathetic ear are part of Marianne's Monday-through-Friday work. It is also ministry, for ministry happens in these small gestures.

"Constantly caring for the community is essential but not always visible," says one of Marianne's pastors, the Rev. Frank Stoldt. "Marianne has a very firm idea of what it means to live a Christian life in terms of people. Her decisions have revolved around her faith," he noted.

She does ministry with and for people naturally—almost without knowing it. "I do things as a friend. I don't think of it in terms of ministry," said Marianne. "Part of being church people is that you're Christian, and Christian means compas-

sion, friendliness and caring," she marks with a smile.

Serving the church on Sunday is central to Marianne's life. As president of the altar guild she may come to church late in the evening to set up for a wedding or to prepare the altar for Sunday communion. She sings in the choir and serves on the worship and music committee of her congregation. She also volunteers for whatever tasks need to be done Sunday morning. If Marianne disappeared, "there would be a magnificent hole in Wilmette Lutheran Church" (Wilmette, Illinois), says Pastor Stoldt.

There are "Mariannes" in every congregation: quiet workers who their own way help make ministry happen in congregations and in workplaces. Like Marianne Johnson, these faithful and humble disciples serve the body of Christ in small ways that make a huge difference. ■

*Rosemary Dyson is news editor of The Lutheran magazine. She is a member of Prince of Peace Lutheran Church, Schaumburg, Illinois.*

# Florece Miller

Valora Starr



**F**lorece Miller is a people person. She comes from a family of 10 daughters, and shares love and mutual support with her family and with those whom she adopts as family.

She teaches in a style much like Jesus'; the many stories of her early years are not merely stories, but experiences laced with hidden messages for those who listen carefully.

The primary message of these stories is clear: Have faith in God and be ready to serve. Florece Miller believes that what you do in life, and how you do it, are important, for God's people make a difference in the world. She would probably sum up her ministry as "just doing what God has blessed me to do."

Florece witnesses by example. And she is always willing to give testimony to God's goodness, and share the good news with others. That may mean motivating women in the congregation to venture to the church—like the office of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America, or taking part in a community senior citizens' program.

The Millers' home is the base for their daily ministry and support. Flo-

rece has the gift of feeding the hungry, both in body and soul. She offers encouragement and advice, always tempered with the words, "This has been my experience."

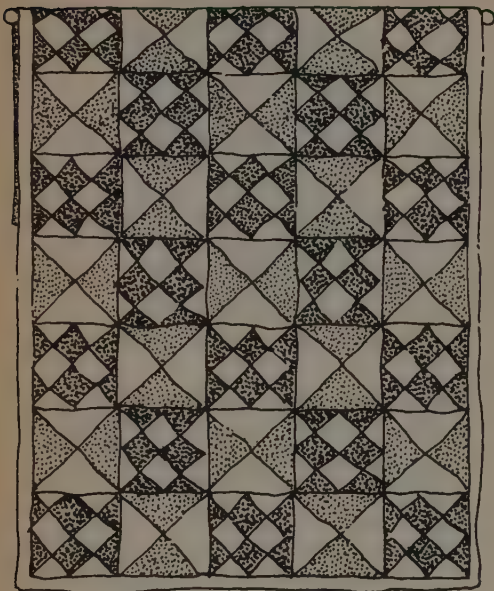
Florece's energy makes most tasks appear effortless. Her constant caring for relatives and church members with long-term illnesses, one after another, is a witness in itself. How does she lead such a full life? "With God's help," she says humbly.

Florece also understands the need for congregational support. She depends upon the Bible study group, the Sunday school class and other points of interaction in the congregation to help her grow in faith and strengthen her witness.

Florece Miller's commitment to the church extends beyond St. Stephen's, her congregation in Chicago. When I hear the song "We've Come This Far by Faith," I hear Florece Miller's witness. ■

*Valora K. Starr is director for growth and witness for Women of the ELCA, and a member of St. Stephen's Evangelical Lutheran Church in Chicago, Illinois.*

# REVIEWS



## **Of Human Hands: A Reader in the Spirituality of Work**

edited by Gregory F.

Augustine Pierce

(Augsburg/ACTA Publications, 1987; \$8.95).

*Of Human Hands* offers the temporary Christian 18 perspectives on maintaining faith and wholeness in ordinary occupations. It is the first in a projected series of books on the Christian at work in the world."

The workers from this ecumenical panel write about their own work environments, which include: A day in an office building, a supermarket, a chemical company, a mail route, a hospital and a house cluttered with children's toys. Their insights into what constitutes a meaningful theology of work are as varied as the vocations.

Articles range from practical to poetic to philosophical. They may be sampled one at a time—perhaps during coffee breaks or after hours on the job—or the collection could be the basis for lively Sunday forum discussions. Suggestions are included for prayer and liturgy that bring workday lives into worship.

*Kathryn Christenson  
St. Peter, Minnesota*

## **Markings**

by Dag Hammarskjöld

(Ballantine/Epiphany, 1964; \$4.95)

*Markings* is a compilation of poems, thoughts, ideas, and quotations so profound that it beckons one's deepest contemplations. Selections begin in 1925 when the Swedish-born diplomat was 20 years old, and end with

erpts written in 1961, days before  
nmarskjold, then secretary-gen-  
of the United Nations, died in a  
ne crash en route to a U.N. cease-  
negotiation.

hough the book contains no di-  
mention of Hammarskjold's re-  
kable diplomatic career, the pro-  
ssion of entries from year to year  
strates the dramatic effect these  
es had on his life. Hammarskjold  
ometimes trudgingly, sometimes  
inctly, but always eloquently  
es readers through the peaks and  
eys of his life. In doing so he chal-  
ges readers to explore the signif-  
ce of even the simplest events of

ince its initial printing in 1964,  
*Prayers* has provided a spiritual,  
ompassing view of life that is  
eless. It is a classic that can be  
urned to over and over again.

*Daniel Earle*

*River Forest, Illinois*

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### **in and Simple: A man's Journey to Amish**

Sue Bender  
rper San Francisco,  
1; \$10.95);

### **in and Simple Journal**

Sue Bender  
rper San Francisco,  
1; \$12.95).

oin Sue Bender on a delightful  
ney into the Amish community  
aith as she explores her values  
asks, "What really matters in  
" Her book is a nine-patch quilt  
imple truths gained from her so-  
n with the Amish people. An art-  
Bender is quick to observe that  
Amish live what they believe.  
ir life is their art."

or those inspired to write about  
r own journeys, the beautiful

journal, including a brief synopsis of  
Bender's experience, is a lovely ac-  
companiment to the book. The pref-  
ace includes encouraging words for  
the beginning journal writer. Thoughtful quotes and vivid photo-  
graphs of Amish quilts are woven  
throughout the journal, inviting  
readers' reflections to complement  
them.

Together the books make a won-  
derful gift set for a good friend, or for  
someone who might appreciate a mo-  
mentary slowing of life's hectic pace.

*Kari Nelson Mueller*

*Apple Valley, Minnesota*

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### **3:16 Bible Texts Illuminated**

by Donald E. Kunth

(A-R Editions, Inc., 1991; \$29.95).

You probably know John 3:16 by  
heart, but how about Leviticus 3:16?  
or Revelation 3:16? Donald Kunth's  
book adds a new twist to Bible com-  
mentary by looking at all 3:16 verses.  
The result is an elegant volume  
whose title has a double meaning.  
First Kunth helps the reader under-  
stand the Scriptures through histor-  
ical, cultural and linguistic exami-  
nation. Then he presents each 3:16  
text in the beautifully illustrated cal-  
ligraphy of Herman Zapf and 58 oth-  
er internationally known calligraph-  
ers.

Each book of the Bible is intro-  
duced by a one-page overview. Two  
more pages present a detailed study  
of the 3:16 passage from that book.  
Bible studies and commentaries can  
sometimes be dry, heavy intellectual  
fare, but this book offers readers a  
feast for the eyes as well as for the  
brain.

*Scott Holl*

*Chicago, Illinois*

*Reviews continued on next page*

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## **Harper's Bible Pronunciation Guide**

edited by William O. Walker, Jr.  
(Harper & Row, 1989, \$15.95).

Have you ever: Led a Bible study and wondered how to pronounce those city names? Been the lector on Sunday and puzzled over the names of the 12 tribes of Israel? Been embarrassed because you can't say *eschatology* and *hermeneutics*? Then this is the book for you.

This guide contains more than 7000 words used in the Bible, including many Hebrew and Greek terms, as well as discussions of the Bible. A clear and easy-to-use pronunciation key runs across the bottom of every page. This book would make a fine gift to your church library or pastor. Or do yourself a favor and buy one for your own collection.

*Rosemary Sinniger  
Pennington, New Jersey*

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## **The Parish Nurse: Providing a Minister of Health to Your Congregation**

by Granger E. Westberg  
with Jill Westberg McNamara  
(Augsburg, 1990; \$5.95).

For many congregations, a parish nurse is an idea whose time has come. Many churches have members with regular health-care needs, or who occasionally need someone to come and check their blood pressure, or refer them to an area physician. But possibly the greater need is for someone to listen to them, and provide health-care advice.

A parish nurse is someone who can listen and provide such advice and assurance. A parish nurse can help a busy pastor make home visits.

This book includes suggestions starting a parish nurse program in your congregation.

*Kathleen K. Dusek  
Superior, Wisconsin*

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## **The American Journey 1492-1992: Call to Conversion A Process in Response to the Quincentenary**

by Marie Dennis Grosso,  
Ched Myers, Cindy Moe-Lobeda  
and Stuart Taylor  
(Pax Christi, 1991; \$5.00).

This eight-session reflection process for adults, written in collaboration with the Center for Global Education at Augsburg College, Minneapolis, Minnesota, is based upon the gospel of Mark and focuses on the historical, economic, political and spiritual legacy of the conquest of America. It helps participants move from merely reacting to suffering and injustice toward articulating and realizing a vision for a more humane, sustainable and equitable world.

The process may be adapted for use as a class, a study series, a weekend retreat. Designed for use in groups, it is self-facilitated. The authors are available to lead workshops, to equip group facilitators and to lead retreats.

*The American Journey* is available through Pax Christi at 348 East 13th Street, Erie, PA 16503. For help with workshops or retreats, call 202/438-1372.

*Cindy Moe-Lobeda  
Washington, D.C.*

*Unless otherwise noted, books reviewed in LWT can be obtained through your local library or bookstore, or by contacting your nearest Augsburg Fortress location.*

I will pour out my  
upon all flesh, and  
sons and your daughters  
prophesy. . . ."

2:17

◆◆ Ecumenical Decade

# To Hear, Encourage and Empower the Voices

Elna K. Solvang

Our Sunday school class was studying the passage from Luke where Mary is visited by an "angel," a messenger of God. The children had divided the reading into different voices and were deciding who would read each one.

"Are angels male or female?" asked one student.

Without hesitation, 6-year-old Lynn responded: "An angel can be either. It doesn't matter. The angel just had to be some one, or else there would be just a voice and that would only weaken Mary."

I listened with amazement to the witness of this young theologian as she interpreted the scriptural story. She knew the importance of incarnation—the significance of a bodily messenger of the word. On her own, she had applied that knowledge to her friend's question. And her insight made the message and the messenger come alive for the children (and adults!) in the group that day.

Lynn was exercising her discipleship—telling and interpreting her faith to the people around her, responding to their questions, and inviting others to see God present, active and speaking in their lives. Yet until I listened to Lynn I had failed to recognize and encourage her discipleship. That day I began to realize that we could not support another in discipleship until I was open to *seeing* the world through her eyes, *hearing* the word through her voice, *knowing* the faith in her life.

I have had many reasons in the years since to rejoice over Lynn's words and deeds of discipleship. But I have begun to worry, too. I worry that Lynn's insights and willingness to

I WORRY

because

there are

so many

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squelch or

squander

the

voices of

discipleship.



talk about her faith will be discouraged. I worry that no one will listen to her questions, encourage her thinking, invite her to talk to others. I worry that as the years pass she will grow reluctant to interpret the meaning of Scripture and be afraid to pray aloud or speak about faith matters.

I worry that she will swallow her questions, give all attention to the words of others, and leave speaking of God to the "experts." I worry that little will be expected of her because she is a girl, and that gradually over the years the church will desire her service but encourage her silence.

What if Lynn is willing to share her faith and insights, but no one will listen? What if no one will invite her to speak or preach, teach or visit, pray, write or lead? What if her words and perspective are not welcome, or not taken seriously? Will she be asked what she thinks the mission priorities of the congregation ought to be, or what she thinks *salvation* is, or what language is meaningful to her in describing God's activities?

The discipleship of the Lynns of this world could so easily be lost to the church. Some may choose to stay away. Others may be present, even busy in activities, but never venture a word about their world or their faith. If the words of interpretation, consolation, edification, praise and meditation that they can offer are never said, the whole community of disciples will be weaker for their loss.

I worry because there are so many ways to squelch or squander the voices of discipleship. But I hope too. I hope because the call to discipleship comes with the gift of the Holy Spirit. God's power and presence are poured out upon everyone: young and old, female and male, of every nation and language. In Pentecost, the new day foreseen by the prophet Joel has begun. Daughters and sons *will* prophesy.

Recognizing the need to encourage listening and speaking, denominations around the world have set as one of the goals of the Ecumenical Decade of Churches in Solidarity with Women: "*to hear, encourage and empower the voices of women in theology and teaching.*" This is a passionate concern for the Lynns of every age and location. It is a commitment that can be practiced everywhere in the church. Here are some suggestions:



**ar!**

listen carefully as women talk about their faith. What images and stories of God's work and what parts of the Lutheran tradition are particularly meaningful in women's lives? Do these reflections open new understandings of the Gospel message and its impact in our lives? Incorporate these insights and language into the preaching, liturgy, evangelism and social ministry of the congregation.

Read books, poetry and theological studies by women. Don't stop if you don't agree with one. Learn to listen to the variety of women's voices and both critique and commend what they say.

**courage!**

Invite women to preach and speak in worship and other events of the congregation—and not just on Women's Sunday at women's gatherings.

Encourage girls and women in the congregation to consider volunteer and professional work in the church. Explore all opportunities, even those not traditionally defined as "women's work."

Look at the art in the church building. Listen to the hymns, sermons and prayers. Do these speak to the experiences of women? Expand the church's vision and vocabulary of church to specifically include women.

**power!**

Appreciate the Holy Spirit's work in another woman's life. Give thanks, pass an encouraging word to women as they tell their faith.

When a woman speaks, help others in the group to listen. Encourage women to take their spoken discipleship as seriously as their serving discipleship.

Recruit and train women for teaching, preaching, and serving in the church.

Listen to women who are not involved in the church. Learn from them of messages they have heard in the church and respond to their questions.

Provide opportunities to support one another in discipleship and service. The Ecumenical Decade goal is a reminder to listen and learn as the Spirit speaks through the language of the lives of women. ■

*K. Solvang is director for education and training and secretary for administration, ELCA Commission for Women.*

**I HOPE**

**because the  
call to  
discipleship  
comes with  
the gift of  
the Holy  
Spirit.**

Blessed are ... ♦♦

"Blessed are the pure in heart,  
for they will see God." Matthew 5:8

# The Collision

Barbara Jurgensen

"Hi, it's me again," a young woman said as she appeared at the door of Pam's hospital room. Pam looked at her blankly. "I stopped in to see you a few days ago. May I come in?"

"I'm sorry, I don't remember," Pam said apologetically. "Everything's been such a blur. . . ."

It had been a week since the accident, and Pam was still piecing together what had happened to her.

"Can you remember anything about the accident?" the visitor asked.

"It's beginning to come back. I had just finished the last tennis practice of the year," Pam began. "I'm on the team at the college . . . and the coach was telling me goodbye. . . . He said that I could be a really fine tennis player . . . if I were willing to make tennis the most important thing in my life. . . ."

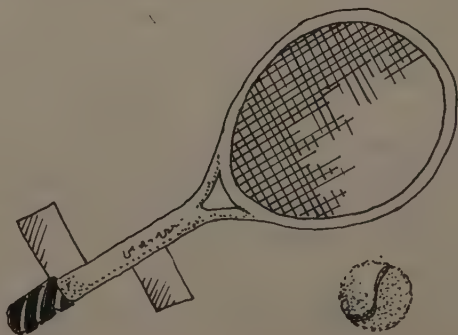
That's interesting . . . several years ago my violin teacher said I could be a good violinist . . . if I'd make the violin the most important thing in my life. . . ."

Pam leaned over toward the glass of water on the bedtable, took a few sips through the bendable straw, and went on.

"I guess all my life I've been looking . . . looking for the thing that would be important enough to put my whole life into . . . but so far I haven't found it. . . . Anyway, after practice, I was driving through the intersection north of the college when suddenly out of the corner of my eye I saw a car. It's funny, the car is vague. But I 'came to' for a few moments before surgery, and I heard a doctor say something about a lot of damage to my hands and left arm. . . . and the strangest thing, all I could think of was 'there goes tennis and the violin!'"

She looked down at her bandaged arm and hands.

The visitor said, "I think we have a few things in common. Six years ago, when I was a college sophomore, I discovered I had a malformation. I spent months go-



ere can come a time in our lives  
when there's a collision . . . we run  
against the Christian faith and we  
either decide to back away from it,  
. . . jump into it.

ugh surgery, radiation, chemotherapy. I began to think about the meaning of my life. I'd gone to Sunday school and church when I was younger, but then I got busy with other things.

While I was in the hospital a chaplain began visiting me. Some friends brought me a Bible, and as I read and reread the story of Jesus I began to get a glimmer of what it means that God has forgiven me through Jesus and has work for me here. So when I finished college I went to the seminary across the street. And now here I am a senior." But is it going to be . . . enough?" Pam asked. "You've given up a lot, haven't you?"

"I feel I've found exactly what I was looking for—and it's even better than I'd hoped," the visitor said. "And I want to meet people like you, and talk to them about the most important things in life. For me it doesn't get any better than that!"

So the chaplain and your friends and the Bible . . . helped you find your way?"

A number of other people helped along the way—some from long ago. Augustine once said that our hearts are restless until they find

rest in our Lord. And Soren Kierkegaard wrote that purity of heart is to will one thing—to center our lives in Jesus. Kierkegaard also wrote that there can come a time in our lives when there's a collision, when we run up against the Christian faith and we either decide to back away from it, or we take the leap of faith and jump into it wholeheartedly.

"I think this is what Jesus is telling us in one of the Beatitudes when he said, 'Blessed are the pure in heart, for they will see God.' So what I want to do with my life is to follow Jesus. That's what I've been trying to do these last few years, and it's brought me the greatest joy I've ever known."

Pam was quiet for a while, then said, "Thanks for coming to see me. Will you come back again so we can talk some more?"

"I'll look forward to it," the visitor said. ■

*This is the sixth in a story series based on the Beatitudes by Barbara Jurgensen, assistant professor of ministry and contextual education at Trinity Lutheran Seminary, Columbus, Ohio.*

## Brief Prayers on News Items

Sonia C. Groenewold

### ♦ Bolivian Lutherans celebrate traditions

The Bolivian Evangelical Lutheran Church is using the 1992 Columbus quincentenary to celebrate survival. The church works almost exclusively with Aymara- and Quechua-speaking people. The Rev. Loayza Ashha German, president of the 18,000-member church, says the church is trying to help the Aymara and Quechua people carry some of their history and traditions into their Lutheran congregations.

*Gracious God, let the gospel live for the Aymara and Quechua people.*

### ♦ Arizona Lutherans find ministry with immigrants

A ministry in Yuma, Arizona, called *Proyecto San Pablo* (Project St. Paul), operates a variety of services to help immigrants. Among the programs are English as a Second Language and GED classes, citizenship classes, advocacy and referrals. Originally operated out of Faith Lutheran Church, a largely white congregation, *Proyecto San Pablo* now has its own building and four full-time and two part-time staff.

*God of Love, bless Proyecto San Pablo and all ministries with immigrants.*

### ♦ Namibian Lutherans to ordain women

The general assembly of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in Namibia last year voted to accept women pastors. One of the women likely to benefit is Eva-Liisa Shitundeni, who completed a theology course 15 years ago. She has been working in the church as a homecraft instructor and has kept current with refresher courses for deacons and other church workers.

*Eternal God, bless the ministry of Eva-Liisa and her Namibian sisters.*

### ♦ ELCA active in health-care campaign

The Evangelical Lutheran Church in America is among more than 100 national and 30 state religious organizations that launched a national campaign for universal health care earlier this year. This follows a decision of the 1989 churchwide assembly to support universal access to health care. The campaign calls for systematic reform of health services and urges programs of prevention, primary and acute care.

*God of justice, help us be advocates in our ministry.*

Remember to add to your prayer list people and issues in the news.

*Sonia C. Groenewold is senior editor of The Lutheran.*



# Daddy's Girl

Karen A. Ford

When people see my dad and me together, they always remark on how much we look alike. My father then proudly opens his chest and proclaims to everyone in the tri-state area, "That's my good luck! Every girl should look like her father!" I usually blush and mumble a "thank you," quite pleased by the exchange. He's right, it's unusual. I am lucky!

My dad is a marvelous man. I sometimes wonder how he has managed to be the kind of man—and the kind of father—he is. Then I look to the heavens and thank God for this particular blessing and whisper a little thanks to my mother for making it a fine choice.

My mother died when I was five years old, and daddy has had to be both mother and father. It was difficult, but I never felt a moment's neglect or want. My father took me everywhere—to the office, on political campaigns, on trips. Every other Friday evening we went out to dinner at some of the nicest restaurants. Every spring and fall we went shopping for clothes. He took me shopping to buy my first bra. And he is the only man at most of my Girl Scout functions. My dad transferred from public school to a Lutheran

school. I became a member of the Lutheran church and he subsequently joined as well. He is the reason why I am organized, punctual and politically involved. And also the major reason for my stubborn streak.

Through first dates, proms, college, divorce, job transfers and all the other peculiarities that make living such a challenging and wondrous experience, my father has stood with me, behind me and in front of me when I needed him to (whether I asked or not). He embodies those Christian values that we hold so dear: faithfulness, caring, loyalty and unconditional love.

If this reads like a testimonial, so be it. It is my public thank-you to one of the most important and influential persons in my life. Every night as I pray, I say a little thank-you to my heavenly father for my earthly one.

Thanks, daddy—I love you. ■

*Karen Ford is a member of St. Stephen's Evangelical Lutheran Church, Chicago, Illinois. She was convention assistant for the Women of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America First Triennial Convention.*

God is like . . . ♦♦

# A Rock

**Morris O. Wee**



Teenagers in our congregation returned from last year's Youth Gathering singing, "The Lord liveth. And blessed be the Rock! And may the God of our salvation be exalted!" They were singing words that David sang when God delivered him from his enemies. David's song begins: "The Lord is my rock, my fortress, and my deliverer" (Psalm 18:2). God is a sheltering rock that protects us from danger and keeps us safe.

Rock is one of Scripture's favorite images for God. The psalmist proclaims that God "alone is my rock and my salvation" (Psalm 62:2); the prophet Isaiah complains the people "have not remembered the Rock of your refuge" (17:10); and Moses chastises the nation, for Israel "scoffed at the Rock of his salvation" (Deuteronomy 32:15).

God is a rock of refuge; God is also a rock of origin. Moses again scolds the people: "You were unmindful of the Rock that bore you; you forgot the God who gave you birth" (Deuteronomy 32:18). God, our rock, is the one who birthed us. Isaiah writes: "Look to the rock from which you were hewn, and to the quarry from which you were dug" (51:1). Carved in the image of the rock, our

God, we receive identity and life.

My wife's grandfather grew up as a fisherman in north Norway. Every summer he and his cousins would sail their boats to the outer Lofoten Islands to fish. Once they were caught in a great storm. They had anchored their boats in the lee of a small, flat island, and swam ashore. As the wind roared and the seas rose, they were driven to the high spot on the island, a rock well. Soon the waves were surging at the well. Two of the cousins said, "Let's swim for our boats! If we stay here we will be washed away!" The others tried to dissuade them, but the two finally leaped into the waves. When the storm abated, and the sun rose, the cousins who had clung to the rock well looked around to find each other alive. The two who swam for their boats were never seen again.

Our God is a rock: a rock that shelters and saves; a rock that gives identity and life. Cling to the rock, and you will live. ■

*Morris O. Wee lives with his wife, Kristine Carlson-Wee and three children in Northfield, Minnesota, where he is pastor of St. John's Lutheran Church.*

## MISSION:

## Growth

## Who Is a Leader?

Are you a leader? Many women do not think of themselves as leaders because they have not been elected or selected for a special position. Sometimes we are so impressed by what we read and hear about "leadership talent" and "leadership gifts" that it is hard to think of ourselves as qualified to lead.

We affirm in our purpose statement that as Women of the ELCA we are called to discipleship in Jesus Christ. We think of disciples as leaders; after all, it was the disciples who told the story of Jesus. Were the disciples special people?

Mary Magdalene is the most prominent of Jesus' female disciples, but little is known about her except that she was healed of seven demons and that she was one of the women who supported Jesus' ministry (Luke 8:2-3). Yet this woman, apparently too unremarkable to merit further description, is listed in all four Gospels as one of the first to know of the resurrection. She was the one first proclaimed to the apostles that Christ had risen.

The disciples of Jesus were a varied and unlikely group: Four were Pharisees and one was a tax collec-

tor. It is clear that those who followed Jesus on earth had not been chosen because they had been appointed or elected to important positions in the synagogue or society. Jesus selected his disciples from among the "ordinary" people of his time and place, and he valued the "ordinary" gifts they brought, knowing that those gifts would be all that the disciples would need to witness faithfully.

We, too, have the gifts we need to be disciples. Saint Paul said it this way: "Now there are varieties of gifts, but the same Spirit; and there are varieties of services, but the same Lord; and there are varieties of activities, but it is the same God who activates all of them in everyone" (1 Corinthians 12:4).

We are all leaders at different times. We lead by using the gifts we have been given to witness faithfully to our resurrected Lord. Sometimes we are chosen to occupy designated positions of leadership, but our leadership as Christians is most often manifested in the ordinary acts of our daily lives. ■

Patricia Robertson  
Director for Leadership  
Development

## MISSION:

# Action

## Active Discipleship

What can it mean to take seriously the example of Jesus Christ? Given the Women of the ELCA's emphasis (through 1996) on Women and Children Living in Poverty, can we heed Christ's call to feed the hungry and be neighbor to the poor?

One idea suggested by Gerald Schlabach in *And Who Is My Neighbor?: Poverty, Privilege and the Gospel of Christ* (Herald Press, 1990; available through Augsburg Fortress) is to develop personal relationships with low-income persons. He suggests, for example, that you arrange encounters between middle- and low-income women by inviting some low-income women to speak with your circle or unit about their own experiences. Or have your group visit a low-income community.

Remember, however, that any structured meeting between middle-income women and poor people will require sensitivity to protect the dignity of the low-income participants. The low-income women must know what your group wants from them and why. Including them in the planning will build a feeling of trust. Locating a person whom the low-income people respect is important, so that person can act as a bridge build-

er—introducing the two groups much as two individuals might be brought together by a mutual friend.

Schlabach suggests three approaches: hearing stories, entering the reality of the poor, and sharing activities like meals, worship and prayer.

For individuals, other options include volunteering at a food pantry or soup kitchen; weatherizing (or helping others) a home for poor or elderly persons; serving or observing quietly at the emergency room of a county hospital, food-stamp center, legal aid office; and visiting a prison. Make a conscious effort to enter into conversation with the low-income people involved. In rural areas, you might visit with those who have left their farms because of economic hardship, seeking to understand and give support.

When we explore human relationships with individuals in our communities, then our involvement with women and children living in poverty will be especially real and heartfelt. Are you willing to give it a try? ■

Joan Pope  
Director for Peace  
with Justice

# MISSION:

# Community

## Take Up the Cross and Follow Me

*Jesus told his disciples, 'If you want to become my followers, let them deny themselves and take up their cross and follow me.'"*

*Matthew 16:24*

The Women of the ELCA purpose statement says that we are called to discipleship in Jesus Christ. What does this mean for you and me? How do we, as modern-day disciples, carry out the Great Commission to "Go therefore and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit. . . ." (Matthew 28:19)?

Remembering that through our baptism in Christ Jesus we become members of the priesthood of all believers, we find an answer in Jesus' words to the Jews, "If you continue to say this word, you are truly my disciples and you will know the truth, and the truth will make you free" (John 8:31-32).

God is truth. And our Christian freedom to be God's disciples in this world comes first from our relationship to God, then, as we live out God's will, from our relationships with one another.

We are all God's disciples; how we carry out our discipleship depends upon our gifts and our call. We are not all called to preach or baptize. But, as Christ's disciples, we share God's gifts of faith, hope and salvation and, if we are to be true disciples, we are called to take up the cross of our daily lives.

Most of us are not called to do great and wondrous things. Most of us live out our faith with our families and friends, on our jobs and in our congregations. For most of us, carrying our cross as a disciple means taking time from our busyness to hear another's pain; reaching out to touch those that others might feel untouchable; loving those who appear unlovable—for Jesus' sake. It means accepting the burdens and sacrifices of our life as God's will for us at this time, and helping one another experience God's gift of hope. It means spreading the good news that no matter how many little crosses we bear, the cross of salvation was carried by our Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ! ■

*Dolores Yancey  
Director for Community  
and Organizational  
Development*

## HELP WANTED: DISCIPLES

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Robin McCullough

### JOB TITLE

Disciples of Jesus Christ.

### BASIC FUNCTION

Follow Jesus Christ and accept his teachings. Internalize his values so that your very existence is affected and reflects that commitment. Go and tell.

### QUALIFICATIONS

- Faith in God's grace and promises.
- Confession of Jesus Christ as the ruler of your life.
- Earnest desire to follow Christ each day.

### MAJOR DUTIES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

- *Live among God's faithful people.\** Participate in a community of other disciples. Be prepared to love and be loved, to forgive and be forgiven. Encourage the body of Christ—other Christian disciples. Engage in the joys and struggles of God's people. Receive the support of the community. Give support to the community.
- *Hear [God's] Word; worship and share in [the Lord's] Supper.* Open yourself to the Holy Spirit; listen for God. Study the Holy Scriptures. Pray. Sing. Be quiet.
- *Proclaim the good news of God in Christ through word and deed.* Pattern your life after Jesus. Let your actions match your words.
- *Serve all people, following the example of our Lord Jesus.* This includes regular and intentional offerings of time, talent and possessions. Tithing is helpful for spiritual growth. Occasionally "wash feet," as Jesus washed the feet of the disciples. Not all will want their feet washed. Some people may not say "thank you." Some feet will be most unlovely. Some will deny you and your service. But get the "water" ready.
- *Strive for justice and peace in all the earth.* Speak out against unfair and unjust situations. Treat people with respect and dignity as God's own children. Acknowledge this creation as God's and responsibly care for it. Become a peacemaker in home, neighborhood, church and workplace.

## REFERENCES

List some people who can verify that your life is a witness to Christ.

## UNUSUAL WORKING CONDITIONS

Disciples need to be prepared to share in the suffering of Christ: might include persecution, sacrifice, denying oneself, even death. But also includes boundless joy—joy in emptying oneself and taking on the role of a servant. And joy in receiving into life those who had been lost.

## COMPENSATION

- Freedom from the bondage of alienation and brokenness.
- The empowerment of the Holy Spirit, who serves as your guide.
- Gifts of the Holy Spirit received at Baptism: “. . . *the spirit of wisdom and understanding, the spirit of counsel and might, the spirit of knowledge and the fear of the Lord, the spirit of joy in your [God's] presence.*”
- Inheritance of eternal life.

DISCIPLES ARE STILL IN DEMAND . . . CAN YOU AFFORD NOT TO APPLY? ■

\*Excerpts in italics are reprinted from Service of Affirmation of Baptism, Lutheran Book of Worship copyright © 1978, p. 201.

*The Rev. Robin McCullough is pastor of St. John Lutheran Church, Canal Fulton, Ohio.*

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